



# STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION STAFF LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS

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Date Introduced:	02/18/11	Bill No:	<a href="#">Assembly Bill 1112</a>
Tax Program:	Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fee	Author:	Huffman
Sponsor:	Pacific Environment	Code Sections:	GC 8670.40
Related Bills:		Effective Date:	01/01/12

## BILL SUMMARY

Among other things, this bill would increase the current cap on the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fee from five cents (\$0.05) to eight cents (\$0.08) per barrel of crude oil or petroleum product and allow the oil spill Administrator to annually adjust the maximum fee for inflation.

## ANALYSIS

### CURRENT LAW

Under existing law, Government Code Section 8670.40 imposes an **oil spill prevention and administration fee**, currently set at a rate of five cents (\$0.05) per barrel, upon crude oil received at a marine terminal from within or outside the state, and upon petroleum products received at a marine terminal from outside the state. The fee is collected by the marine terminal operator from the owner of the crude oil or petroleum product based on each barrel that is received from a vessel operating in, through, or across the state's marine waters. Additionally, a pipeline operator pays the fee for each barrel of crude oil originating from a production facility in marine waters and transported in the state through a pipeline operating across, under, or through the state's marine waters.

The fee amount is set annually by the Administrator, an appointee of the Governor in the Department of Fish and Game. The Administrator annually prepares a plan that projects revenue and expenses over three fiscal years and uses the projections to set the fee, not to exceed five cents (\$0.05) per barrel of crude oil or petroleum products, to meet the current and proposed state budget. The Administrator may allow for a surplus if revenues are expected to be exhausted or for possible contingencies.

The fee is paid to the State Board of Equalization (BOE) on a monthly basis and deposited into the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund. The moneys in this fund are not used for responding to an oil spill but, rather, are used to fund oil spill prevention programs and various studies related to oil spills.

The BOE also collects an **oil spill response fee** as required by Government Code Section 8670.48. A uniform oil spill response fee is paid by specified marine terminal operators, pipeline operators, and refiners, in an amount not exceeding \$0.25 per barrel of petroleum product or crude oil. The BOE only collects the fee when the funds in the Oil Spill Response Trust Fund fall below the specified level.

**PROPOSED LAW**

This bill would amend Government Code Section 8670.40 to increase the cap on the oil spill prevention and administration fee from five cents (\$0.05) to eight cents (\$0.08) per barrel of crude oil or petroleum product. In addition to annually setting the fee, the Administrator would be permitted to annually adjust the maximum fee for inflation, as measured by the California Consumer Price Index (CPI). Additionally, the Administrator would be required to notify the BOE of the adjusted fee rate, which is to be rounded to no more than four decimal places and which is to take effect on the first day of the month beginning not less than 30 days from the date of notification.

Unrelated to the BOE, this bill would also increase the nontank vessel fee charged by the Administrator to a proposed flat rate of \$3,000 per nontank vessel (currently set to a maximum of \$2,500 per vessel). The rate is related to the Administrator's costs, and all revenues are deposited in the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1990, Senate Bill 2040 (Chapter 1248, Keene) added and Senate Bill 7 (Chapter 10, Keene) amended Section 8670.40 to impose the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fee. These bills also enacted the Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act, which added provisions to the Government Code (§8670.1 et seq.), the Public Resources Code (§8750 et seq.), and the Revenue & Taxation Code (§46001 et seq.). The Act covers all aspects of marine oil spill prevention, administration, and response in California.

Last year, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 234 (Huffman), which would have increased the maximum fee to six cents (\$0.06). Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill, stating:

"This bill requires the administrator of the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) to develop regulations addressing "pre-booming" of vessels involved in the transfers of oil fuel and oil cargo. The bill also increases the per-barrel fee, paid by tankers, and the non-tank vessel fee, that is used to support OSPR's administrative functions and authorizes the Administrator to adjust the maximum per-barrel fee annually for inflation according to the Consumer Price Index.

This bill is unnecessary. Pursuant to the authority already provided under existing law, OSPR is currently in the process of evaluating the benefit of requiring "pre-booming" standards on fuel transfer operations where it is safe and effective to do so. Additionally, the magnitude of the fee increase proposed to fund OSPR's regulatory activities per this bill far exceeds what OSPR estimates it would cost to promulgate the "pre-booming" regulations this bill would require."

**COMMENTS**

- 1. Sponsor and Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by Pacific Environment and is intended to adjust the Oil Spill Prevention Administration Fund revenues to current inflation levels and require the state's oil spill prevention agency to increase its oversight of vessels conducting oil transfers.
- 2. A possible increase in the oil spill prevention and administration fee would not create administrative problems for the BOE.** The BOE currently administers and

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*This staff analysis is provided to address various administrative, cost, revenue and policy issues; it is not to be construed to reflect or suggest the BOE's formal position.*

collects this fee. As previously explained, the Administrator sets the fee in accordance with an annual plan. The fee is currently set at the maximum rate of five cents (\$0.05) per barrel of crude or petroleum product. If the maximum fee rate should increase to eight cents (\$0.08), the BOE will have no difficulty in administering a fee increase. Similarly, subsequent annual inflationary adjustments made in the maximum fee rate by the Administrator would also not present an issue for the BOE. The BOE worked with author's office last year on AB 234 (Huffman) to require the Administrator to provide the BOE with sufficient notice when the fee is set each year, with the new fee effective on the first day of the month beginning no fewer than 30 days following such notification, and that the new fee rate is to be rounded to no more than four decimal places. That suggestion, incorporated in this bill, will ensure that the BOE can absorb costs related to possible rate changes.

## **COST ESTIMATE**

The BOE would incur minor costs to administer this measure, which would be absorbable in the current fiscal year. These costs would be attributable to, among other things, advising and answering inquiries from the public, identifying and noticing affected fee payers, and working with the Administrator to explain fee changes related to the inflation adjustment to the maximum oil spill prevention and administration fee. The BOE is reimbursed for its costs, as provided in statute.

## **REVENUE ESTIMATE**

### **BACKGROUND, METHODOLOGY, AND ASSUMPTIONS**

**Current Revenue.** According to the BOE's FY 2009-10 Annual Report, the BOE collected over \$25 million in oil spill prevention and administration fees at the current maximum rate of \$0.05 per barrel of crude oil or petroleum products. An analysis of the BOE's data did not suggest any obvious trends in recent years; average fees collected over the past four fiscal years amount to \$27 million.

**Revenue Increase.** This bill would increase that maximum rate by 60% to \$0.08 per barrel of crude oil or petroleum products. Further, the measure allows the proposed fee to be adjusted annually for inflation, as measured by the California CPI. According to the Department of Finance's CPI forecast, the CPI is estimated to increase by an average of 2% over the next three fiscal years.

### **REVENUE SUMMARY**

- Based on the average fees (\$27 million) collected by BOE over the past few fiscal years and an increase in the fee to the proposed maximum rate of \$0.08 per barrel, it is estimated that revenues would increase by \$16 million (60% × \$27 million = \$16 million).
- The revenue may increase by an additional \$0.9 million [(\$27 million + \$16 million = \$43 million) × 2%] per fiscal year if the fee were to be increased to the maximum rate permitted, according to the CPI provision of the bill.

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